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An Impossible Alternative: Orientalism and Margaret Bourke-White's "A Moneylender's House" (1947)

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AN IMPOSSIBLE ALTERNATIVE: ORIENTALISM AND MARGARET BOURKE-WHITE'S A MONEYLENDER'S HOUSE (1947)

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts at Virginia Commonwealth University

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Between 1946 and 1948, American photographer Margaret Bourke-White traveled to India while on assignments for *Life* magazine. Since the late 1940s, a photograph from these assignments that depicts three men sitting in an ornately decorated room has appeared in several publications and exhibitions under variations of the title *A Moneylender's House* (1947). Though Bourke-White is traditionally categorized as a documentary photojournalist, her photograph exhibits motifs similar to those seen in European Orientalist paintings from the nineteenth century. Considering recent scholarship that has expanded the temporal and geographical parameters of the Orientalist photography genre, this thesis analyzes the "documentary" photograph, *A Moneylender's House*, in its varied exhibition and publication contexts to determine whether they present the photographic subjects from a "nonrepressive and

nonmanipulative perspective" (one that Edward Said suggests might provide an "alternative" to Orientalism), or reinforce the "Self/Other" binary at the core of Orientalism.

INTRODUCTION

Between 1946 and 1948 one of the most famous twentieth-century American photojournalists, Margaret Bourke-White, traveled throughout India while on assignments for *Life* magazine. Her photographs from India show people and events before and after the 1947 Indian Independence Act, a proclamation by the British Parliament that marked the official end of eighty-nine years of British rule in India. The Act also declared India and Pakistan to be independent nation-states; this partition spurred a western migration of Islamic peoples to Pakistan, and an eastern movement of Hindu people out of the newly demarcated Pakistan and across the re-defined borders of India.

Life produced ten photo-essays from Bourke-White's photographic work in India.[1] Among them was the photo-essay "The Caste System," published in the May 19, 1947, issue. "The Caste System" featured eight prints of Bourke-White's photographs;

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[1] *Life* articles and photo-essays that featured printed photographs from Bourke-White's India/Pakistan assignment included: "India's Leaders," Vol. 20, No. 21, May 27, 1946, 101-107; "Dr. Gandhi," Vol. 21, No. 3, July 15, 1946, 17; "The Vultures of Calcutta Eat Indian Dead," Vol. 21, No. 11, September 9, 1946, 38-39; "Life Visits the Sikhs of India," Vol. 21, No. 11, September 9, 1946, 134-137; "Indian Airline Hostesses," Vol. 21, No. 14, September 30, 1946, 129-130, 133; "Moslem Prayers Celebrate End of Fast," Vol. 21, No. 14, September 30, 1947, 47-50; "The Caste System," Vol. 22, No. 20, May 19, 1947, 105-112; "The Great Migration," Vol. 23, No. 18, November 3, 1947, 117-125; "Pakistan Struggles for Survival," Vol. 24, No. 1, January 5, 1948, 16-20, 23-26; and "India Loses her 'Great Soul,'" Vol. 24, No. 6, February 9, 1948, 27-31.

one of which was a photographic print of three men sitting on the floor of an ornately decorated room and facing the camera (figure 1). The *Life* photo caption identifies the man on the far left as Bhanwar Rampuria, a "moneylender," and the two men sitting alongside him as his brothers.[2] This printed photograph, as it appeared in *Life* magazine, was presented as part of a documentary representation of the Hindu caste system. A second photograph of the three men shows them facing one another (figure 2). Since 1949, this second photograph has appeared with variations of the title *A Moneylender's House* (1947) in several publications and exhibitions featuring Bourke-White's work in India.[3]

The taking of more than one photograph of a single scene served a specific purpose for *Life* photographers as it provided distinct compositional types from the "*Life* formula," which was institutionalized by the notable *Life* photographer W. Eugene Smith. This formula named eight scene types that editors encouraged photographers to take while on assignment: overall, medium, close-up, portrait, interaction, signature, sequence, and clincher.[4] Photographers' production of such a variety of photographic scenes provided editors with a diverse stock of photographic negatives from which they could

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2 "The Caste System," *Life*, May 19, 1947, 109.

3 Bourke-White took three photographs of Bhanwar Rampuria and his brother. The third has not been included in publications or exhibitions.

4 Kenneth Kobré and Betsy Brill, *Photojournalism: The Professionals' Approach*. 5th edition (Burlington, Massachusetts: Focal Press, 2004), 146. Not every type name clearly explains the photographs they characterize. Kobré and Brill offer extended definitions: the "signature" photograph provides a summary of the photo-essay "with all the key story-telling elements;" a "medium" photograph "[f]ocuses on one activity or group;" and a "clincher" provides an image to close or end the photo-essay.

select and print the ones that would best communicate the narrative of a photo-essay. The photograph of the three men published in *Life* (figure 1) follows the "portrait" scene type in which the three men look towards the camera as they sit in their "environment."[5] The photograph subsequently printed, published and exhibited (figure 2) fits within the "interaction" scene type as it shows people conversing or in action. Hereafter, I refer to the two photographic scenes according to these distinct categories.

This study of these two photographic scenes made as part of the same project for *Life*, but displayed in varied publications and exhibitions, demonstrates how authors, curators and the photographer have used combinations of written text and printed photographs to contextualize similar photographs to support their respective aims and ideologies. Such a study thereby illustrates how the ostensibly documentary images of photojournalism are not immune to interpretation. Art historian Abigail Solomon-Godeau explains that the term "documentary photography" began to appear in literature during the 1920s to differentiate photographs presented as a record of reality from those presented as a product of artistic expression. [6] Despite this distinction, "artistic" and "documentary" photography are not mutually exclusive. Though the documentary photograph serves primarily as a means to depict objective reality or deliver visual fact, it

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[5] Ibid., 146.

[6] Abigail Solomon-Godeau, "Who Is Speaking Thus? Some Questions about Documentary Photography," in *Photography At the Dock: Essays On Photographic History, Institutions, and Practices* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), 169.

may also hold artistic merit. Thus, Solomon-Godeau and other scholars now agree that the distinction between "documentary" and "artistic" photography is not a stark one.

Furthermore, emphasis on the "documentary" qualities, through which a photographic print presents a subject as the photographer represents him or her rather than as he or she *is*, may conceal the authority exercised by the photographer over his or her subject. The factual status of a documentary photograph then may make it available for subjective interpretation and manipulation. For example, texts that accompany printed "documentary" photographs often validate the information presented in the image; in turn, the photographic print validates the text, leading the viewer or reader to conclude that the information in both the printed photograph and text is objective fact. As this thesis demonstrates, Bourke-White's aforementioned "documentary" photographs of the three Indian men are a product of her documentary assignment, however, the instances in which they appear have offered various subjective interpretations that have situated the photographs and their subjects within the construct of "the Orient"—an imagined concept with imperial origins.

In his book *Orientalism* (1979), Edward Said reveals the historical construction of the "Orient" in nineteenth-century Western European literature. Said asserts that written descriptions and accounts of Middle Eastern peoples and cultures constructed a mythical "Orient" (or "the East") that emphasized visual and cultural differences from the "Occident" (or "the West").[7] These differences then provided a means by which the

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[7] Said's review of literature used to construct "the Orient" focuses on accounts of the Middle Eastern and Islamic cultures. This limited scope is often the basis for criticism

"Occident" has been distinguished from the "Orient," creating a binary between the two identities that casts "Oriental" cultures as inferior and subordinate to the Western Occident.[8] Though the art historical genre of Orientalism most often evokes nineteenth-century paintings, photographic representations of Middle Eastern people and locations from the same period include similar Orientalist motifs that included harem women and ethnographic studies from Asia as well as the Middle East. Collections of these photographic objects and prints have received limited study over the years. Recent scholarship, however, in the volume *Photography's Orientalism: New Essays on Colonial Representation* (edited by Ali Behdad and Luke Gartlan) considers such photographic representations to evaluate the theoretical and historical parameters of the categorization of Orientalist photography. Using Said's argument that the "Orient" is an "imaginative geography" rather than a specific location with concrete boundaries, *Photography's Orientalism* questions the geographical and temporal parameters used to qualify Orientalist works. For example, art historian Hannah Feldman's essay on documentary photographs made during the Algerian War of Independence in the 1960s examines ways in which Orientalist attributes are "reinscribed" on photographs from the later part of the twentieth century.[9]

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of Said's *Orientalism*, as the imagined "Orient" has been used to represent people and cultures in the Asian subcontinent and northeastern Africa.

[8] Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage, 1979), 1-2.

[9] Hannah Feldman, "Flash Forward: Pictures at War," in *Photography's Orientalism: New Essays on Colonial Representation*, ed. Ali Behdad and Luke Gartlan (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2013), 153.

According to Said, "Orientalism is premised upon exteriority, that is, on the fact that the Orientalist . . . makes the Orient speak, describes the Orient, renders its mysteries plain for and to the West."[10] Insofar as Bourke-White was an American photographer visiting India for a (relatively) brief time, her two photographic scenes provide a representation of the three men created from a position of exteriority. The problems caused by working from a position of exteriority, as Said explains, rest in the confusion between fact and interpretation: "[I]t needs to be made clear about cultural discourse and exchange within a culture that what is commonly circulated by it is not 'truth' but representations."[11] Such representations, rather than "truths," made from a position of exteriority can assist in the "reinscription" of Orientalism on the photograph, as Feldman's essay implies. Though *Photography's Orientalism* has expanded the geographical and temporal parameters of the genre, critical studies have not yet explicitly considered possible links between Orientalism and products of American photojournalism.

The assumption of "truth" associated with the term documentary photography extends to photojournalism. *Life* magazine founder, Henry R. Luce, famously said of *Life*'s photo-essays and accompanying articles: "We tell the truth as we see it."[12] To Luce's credit, the photograph (at a technological level) records the physical, momentary

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10 Ibid., 20.

11 Ibid., 21.

12 Alden Whitman, "Henry R. Luce, Creator of Time-Life Magazine Empire, Dies in Phoenix at 68," The New York Times, accessed January 26, 2014, http://www.nytimes.com/learning/general/onthisday/bday/0403.html.

reflection of light from objects in front of a camera lens. Luce's exaltation of the documentary capacity of the photograph, however, did not account for the subjective interpretive capacity of the viewer, author or photographer,[13] nor did he consider that the production of meaning empowers not only the photographer but also the viewer over the subject.[14] In response to this issue of the control of the author (artist) over the subject (representation), Said suggests, "Perhaps the most important task of all would be to undertake studies in contemporary alternatives to Orientalism, to ask how one can study other cultures and peoples from . . . a nonrepressive and nonmanipulative, perspective."[15]

This thesis explores the complexity of Said's suggestion by considering Bourke-White's photographs of Bhanwar Rampuria and his brothers as they appear in publications and exhibitions. Chapter 1 provides a visual analysis of the two photographic scenes featuring Bhanwar Rampuria and his brothers, noting their representational similarities to characteristics of nineteenth-century Orientalist paintings described by art historian Linda Nochlin. It also characterizes the twentieth-century American readership of *Life* magazine as holding a position of exteriority from which it is apt to espouse an Orientalist view of Bourke-White's "portrait" and "interaction" scenes. Chapter 2 looks at the photo-essay in which a print of Bourke-White's "portrait" scene

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13 Beaumont Newhall, *The History of Photography* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1982), 235, 238, 244-246.

14 Abigail Solomon-Godeau, "Who Is Speaking Thus? Some Questions about Documentary Photography," *Photography at the Dock* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), 170.

15 Said, 24.

appears in *Life* and considers its relationship to a network theory of Orientalism offered by Ali Behdad, a scholar of comparative literature. Behdad's network theory builds upon the Self/Other binary that is at the core of Said's theory of Orientalism. This network theory accounts for other binary relationships, some of which are discussed in Chapter 3 as an examination of publications and exhibitions that focus on Bourke-White's reputation as a traveling photojournalist and art photographer.

Chapter 4 offers a critical analysis of *The Concerned Photographer*, the most recent exhibition to feature Bourke-White's *A Moneylender's House*, which is thematically distinct from the exhibitions discussed in Chapter 3. The 2006 exhibition did not focus on its featured photographers as artists, but rather offered a selection of photographic prints as witness to issues of inequality. While the exhibition differs significantly from other publications and exhibitions in that have featured the printed photographs, it does not necessarily provide the "nonrepressive and nonmanipulative perspective" for which Said calls. This thesis concludes by noting why such a perspective may in fact be impossible for *A Moneylender's House*.

CHAPTER 1 The Binary that Binds Two Photographs to Orientalism

This chapter offers a visual analysis of Bourke-White's photographs of Rampuria and his brothers that connects the image to Orientalism. Visual comparisons establish connections between Bourke-White's photographs and nineteenth-century Orientalist paintings described in Linda Nochlin's essay "The Imaginary Orient." By further considering the shared visual elements of the "portrait" and "interaction" scenes in relation to the time and place in which they were made, the exploration of the photograph and the cultural environment of its production parallels the methodology of Said's philological analysis of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century texts to reveal the construction of the Self/Other at the core of his theory of Orientalism.

In Bourke-White's "portrait" scene, the three men look at the camera allowing the photograph to show their faces in full view. This forward-facing position is similar to the highly controlled poses used by commercial studio photographers. Bourke-White's "interaction" pose displays the three men facing one another as if engaged in conversation. The gaze of the men does not meet that of the viewer, who is then allowed to assume a voyeuristic position from which he or she can look into the private space as the men go about "business as usual." However, this "interaction" scene is no less posed than the "portrait" in which the three men look towards the camera. In both scenes, Bourke-White constructs the image according to her personal style and the *Life* formula,

though photographs like the "interaction" scene give the illusion that the photographer has captured a spontaneous moment thus concealing the photographer's personal choices.[16]

The effect of such a choice is visible in Bourke-White's inclusion of the larger room that the three men inhabit. In their instructional textbook, Kenneth Kobré and Betsy Brill identify such use of objects or space to situate the sitter as the photojournalist device of "environmental portraiture" in which the photograph "supplies enough details with props, choice of dress, and choice of background to let the reader know something about the lifestyle of the sitter."[17] Nochlin explores the similar incorporation of environmental details in nineteenth-century Orientalist painting. According to Nochlin, such detail suggests a representation of reality, though paintings were often fantastical compositions. She likewise recognizes that photography is also implicated in its promotion of "documentary realism," a phrase that she borrows from art historian and curator Donald Rosenthal.[18] As Nochlin asserts the construction of "reality" in Orientalist paintings, Kobré and Brill note the significant limits of the environmental portrait as a photojournalist or documentary device: the photographer selects the content of the image, and the information within the photograph is limited. Without contextual information (whether in written text or other pictures), each scene offers only a glimpse of three men in a room without any context as to the location of the room within the house or beyond.

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16 Nochlin, "The Imaginary Orient," *The Politics of Vision* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1989), 50.

17 Kobré and Brill, 113.

18 Nochlin, 33.

Both scenes contain several photographic details that parallel Orientalist strategies of representation described by Linda Nochlin and present the subjects as members of an exotic "Orient." In Bourke-White's photographs, the three men sit alongside one another on a large white floor pad. The man on the far left wears a loosely fitted *kurta* shirt and *payjama*-style pants. In the "portrait" pose, the same man pulls back his right shoulder to rest his forearm on a long, cylindrical bolster cushion, causing his body to align in a seated, leisurely contrapposto position—a posture seen in nineteenth-century paintings of Middle Eastern and South Asian peoples, which that purportedly justified the stereotype of the "idle Orient."[19] To the right, the other two men sit and lean forward over their crossed legs, while resting their wrists on their knees. Both men wear formal attire: dark, long-sleeved *Band Gale Ka* coats with pocket squares, white pants, and dark turbans. The position and dress of the men exhibit similarities to an Orientalist work examined in Nochlin's article, Jean-Léon Gérôme's *Snake Charmer*, painted c. 1879 (figure 3). Several men pictured in Gérôme's painting also wear turbans and sit on the floor as they direct their attention toward an unclothed youth who holds a python that has partially wrapped itself around the body of its handler.

Nochlin writes that the viewer or (in the case of Bourke-White) the photographer constructs an "Oriental" reality based on "authentic" detail.[20] Calligraphy, painted on blue wall tiles in the background of the *Snake Charmer*, provides an intricacy that reinforces the "authenticity" of the scene. Though such detail may seem authentic,

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19 Ibid., 39.

20 Ibid., 34.

Nochlin implicitly questions whether the script is actually readable or merely composed to resemble written text.[21] Using extensive visual detail of the photograph to facilitate such a "natural" depiction, Bourke-White's "portrait" and "interaction" scenes present the men as part of a constructed Orient. The depth of field in the photographs (controlled by the photographer via camera lens aperture) puts the entire object-laden room into acceptably sharp focus. The viewer can see that the room décor is ordered in tiers with similar objects grouped or placed near one another. Four oval mirrors almost entirely cover the lowest paintings on the walls. Two of the mirrors cover the faces and shoulders of painted human figures that wear long robes. A row of larger paintings is visible above locked cabinets that are built into the wall, though only a few are fully visible in the photographic print. Above these paintings, framed paintings hang in a way that they can be viewed from below; their tops lean forward while the bottom frames rest against the wall. The largest paintings are closest to the ceiling; windows separate each painted scene. A light bulb hangs on one painting, placed below the open mouth of a jaguar-skin rug that covers the top half of the painted scene. The light bulb is one of dozens hanging from the ceiling and walls, which are clearly visible in the "interaction" photograph. The light-fixture designs include flower-shaped glass shades, ornate globes, and a large crystal chandelier (the cropping of the chandelier from the "portrait" scene is discussed further in Chapter 2). These details in Bourke-White's photographs and Gérôme's painting also reinforce the presentation of the depicted individuals as part of a foreign,

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[21] Ibid., 38. See also footnote 7 on pages 57 and 58, in which Nochlin explains that, in conversation, Said has deemed the calligraphy "unreadable."

exotic culture. As the clothing that the men wear in both the photographs and the painting differentiate the individuals from the "Western" viewer, the presence of exotic animals (Gérôme's painted python and the jaguar skin in Bourke-White's photographs) reinforces the perception of Bourke-White and Gérôme's respective subjects as foreign and mysterious.

As the quantity of painted detail assists in the artist's construction of the "Imaginary Orient" that Nochlin describes, Bourke-White and other *Life* photojournalists produced a volume of photographic material that might give the illusion of a mass of visual evidence. *Life* photographers visually explored (or studied) their subjects from different perspectives, making multiple photographs, according to the *Life* formula, from which magazine editors would select. Bourke-White's varied documentary photographs might then be presented as proof of Rampuria and his brothers' presence in a specific place and time. However, this evidentiary motive does not independently identify or represent the men. The image might mark a momentary action in which the traveling photographer encountered her subject, but the photographer or viewer remains free to create his or her personal interpretation of the photographic subjects. Through this act of interpretation the "reality" within the photographic scene is determined by the perceptions of the Occidental viewer. The Orient, then, is not an objective reality. The importance of detail in constructing an Orientalist view is emphasized by Edward Said as he notes that, "anyone employing Orientalism . . . will designate, name, point to, fix what he is talking or thinking about with a word or phrase, which then is considered either to

have acquired, or more simply to be reality."[22] Said's use of "fix" is particularly suitable if one considers the chemical processes of photography in which light (a metaphor for truth or knowledge) "fixes" the image to a light-sensitive surface. But, as Nochlin asserts, the photograph itself can only serve as material by which a photographer or viewer produces meaning.[23]

While Bourke-White's highly detailed photographs emphasize the presence of their subjects, the absence of the photographer within the image also marks her presence. This visual separation of the photographer from her subject, created by the photographer's position of exteriority within a non-western culture, echoes binaries found in Said's *Orientalism*.[24] Said explains, "Orientalism was ultimately a political vision of reality whose structure promoted the difference between the familiar (Europe, the West, 'us') and the strange (the Orient, the East, 'them'). . . . Orientals lived in their world, 'we' lived in ours."[25] Bourke-White constructs such an unfamiliar world in her two photographs.

Bourke-White's photographs of the men present the viewer with "authentic" detail that accentuates the cultural difference between the American readers of *Life* magazine and her photographic subjects in India. The readers of *Life* magazine were tourists at home whom editor Henry Luce sought to inform and entertain through

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22 Said, 72.

23 Nochlin, 39.

24 Said, 21.

25 Ibid., 43.

photographs that depicted what he described as "things thousands of miles away, . . . things dangerous to come to."[26] The perceived absence of the tourist is a significant presence in Orientalist photographs. Like the "interaction" photograph, the composition presents to the viewer (and virtual tourist) three men "as they are," or, rather, as they are presumed to be.[27]

The paintings, mirrors, chandeliers, etc., signify wealth and also symbolize, for an American readership of *Life* magazine, travel to unfamiliar and exotic countries. The jaguar skin and the painted jungle scenes evoke the 1942 film *Rudyard Kipling's Jungle Book*. Based on Rudyard Kipling's book of short stories, the film follows Mowgli, a boy raised in the jungle by wolves. One scene in the film particularly resembles Bourke-White's photograph as Mowgli stumbles upon a trove of gold in an abandoned temple. Later in the film, three men follow him back to the temple where they retrieve bags of gold. However, each man's desire to possess a large ruby results in the death of two of the three men. In *Rudyard Kipling's Jungle Book*, Americans saw an untamed environment of wild animals, uninhabitable jungles, hidden temples, ancient treasure, and greedy murderers.

Bourke-White's photographs then provided a means by which an American audience could "witness" scenes contemporaneous with the India Independence Act.

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[26] Luce address to the American Association of Advertising Agencies, 30 April 1937, reprinted in *The Ideas of Henry Luce*, ed. John K. Jessup (New York: Antheneum, 1969), 297.

[27] Nochlin, 36-37.

Once published in *Life*, the photograph would reach a viewership of 5.45 million.[28] According to James Baughman, "The modal readers for *Life* and the *Saturday Evening Post* were thirty to thirty-four years of age, from professional and skilled labor classes, married and college-educated."[29] The "pass-along" readership of *Life* far exceeded this number and demographics of subscribers, however, as issues of the magazine were commonplace in salons and barbershops.[30] Photographs fueled the popularity of *Life*, which in the words of founder Henry Luce, "set out to excite interest in what it would be like 'to see life' through the pages of *Life*."[31] The photographs allowed readers to "see" distant lands, though images of a "warring world" were contrasted by more peaceful images of American culture and industry.[32] While Bourke-White's photographs of Rampuria and his brothers do not depict conflict, her assignment for *Life* magazine coincided with dramatic events that preceded and followed the British Parliament's 1947 decision to release India from its imperial rule.[33]

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28 James L. Baughman, "Who Read Life?: The Circulation of America's Favorite Magazine," in *Looking at LIFE Magazine*, ed. Erika Doss (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2001), 44.

29 Baughman, 43.

30 Ibid., 42-44.

31 Terry Smith, "*LIFE*-Style Modernity: Making Modern America," in *Looking at LIFE Magazine*, ed. Erika Doss (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2001), 27.

32 Ibid., 26.

33 For a detailed examination of Independence and Partition in India and Pakistan, see Yasmin Khan, *The Great Partition: The Making of India and Pakistan* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007).

Bourke-White's printed photographs of India provided a means by which *Life* could interpret ostensibly "documentary" scenes for American viewers. The "interaction" and "portrait" prints that feature the men serve as a delineating representation that facilitate the distinction of the photographer and viewer (the "us" or "self") from the photographed subject (the "them" or "other"). Bourke-White's position of exteriority, as an American photographer in India, reinforces this distinction as *Life* presented her images as representative of a culture that exists outside the one in which she and the readers of *Life* lived. Moreover, details visible in the photographs parallel those "alluringly elaborate surfaces" of nineteenth-century paintings described by Nochlin to provide a seemingly authentic (though not an actual) view of "the Orient."[34] The photographs align with the representations of India in popular culture, contrast with the targeted readership of *Life*, and, thereby, portray Indian culture as distinct (and different) from that in America and reinforce the Occident/Orient binary within Orientalism.

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[34] Ibid., 35.

CHAPTER 2 A Network of Orientalism in the *Life* Photo-essay "The Caste System"

This chapter offers critical analysis of Bourke-White's printed "portrait" photograph as it appeared in *Life* magazine accompanied by texts and photographs that reveals the intricate (and often subtle) construction of Orientalism. The binary of the Self/Other is a broad category that can manifest in a much more complex web of texts and images that form what Ali Behdad has called a "network theory of Orientalism." According to Behdad, "A network theory of Orientalism . . . studies the symmetrical and asymmetrical relations between discrete objects, specific individuals, and concrete practices."[35] A network theory of Orientalism is especially appropriate for analyzing Bourke-White's "interaction" scene of Rampuria and his brothers because the photographic print is situated within and contributes to a larger group of texts and images that make up a publication or exhibition.[36]

In the May 19, 1947, issue of *Life* magazine, the photo-essay "The Caste System" includes the printed "portrait" photograph of three men, who are identified as Bhanwar

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[35] Ali Behdad, "The Orientalist Photograph," in *Photography's Orientalism: New Essays on Colonial Representation*, ed. Ali Behdad and Luke Gartlan (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2013), 13.

[36] For a discussion of how circumstances outside the photographic frame affect its meaning, see Blake Stimson "A Photograph Is Never Alone," in *The Meaning of Photography*, ed. Robin Kelsey and Blake Stimson (Williamston, MA: Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 2008), 105-117.

Rampuria (seated on the far left) and his brothers. The photo-essay briefly describes the socioreligious Hindu caste system, offering an explanation of the characteristics that distinguish one caste from another and representing the castes with prints of Bourke-White's photographs. The photo-essay identified the four main castes—Brahmans, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas, and Sudras—as well as a group of people outside the caste system called Untouchables.[37]

The text and photographic prints of "The Caste System" offered readers a brief explanation of the Hindu caste system that ignored the complexity of its socioeconomic and spiritual hierarchies by drawing parallels between Hinduism and Christianity. The article calls the *Veda* or *Rig-Veda* the "bible of the Hindu religion" and cites a verse from the Hymn of Man that recounts the sacrifice of the original man, Purusha, from whom mankind (and the caste system) was made: "His mouth became the Brahman. His arms became the Kshatriya. His thighs are the Vaisya. The Sudra was produced from his feet."[38] Using the Christian Bible as a point of reference, the article underscores the

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[37] "The Caste System," *Life*, May 19, 1947, 105-111. Though *Life* attributes "The Caste System" photographs to Bourke-White, the author of the accompanying text remains unclear. Her keynote address from the Second Annual Photojournalism Conference notes her partnership with *Life* editor Wilson Hicks (stationed in New York), while her book *Halfway to Freedom* mentions an assistant, Lee Eitingon Frizell, who collected the information for text and captions. See Bourke-White, *Halfway to Freedom* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1949) x, 7.

[38] This explanation of *Purusha* is based on a basic reading of the *Rig-Veda* text. The larger significance of *purusha* to Hindu cosmology is outside the scope of this thesis.

authority of the *Rig-Veda* in Hindu culture. The article also identifies the caste classifications as "scriptural laws" that predate Christ by a millennium.[39]

Although these parallels and comparisons might be an attempt to communicate a certain level of understanding to the reader, Said cautions that analogous explanations provide "limited vocabulary and imagery," which produce imagined, Orientalist misconceptions of the represented culture.[40] For example, the *Life* article states that the *Rig-Veda* predates Christ by a thousand years. By situating the age of Hinduism relative to that of Christianity, the article invites its American Christian readers to consider the religious practice as one that is ancient (possibly outdated) and "bring[s] weird and ridiculous results."[41] Furthermore, these comparisons favor the photo-image as an illustration of difference over the explicatory details of Hindu scripture and belief.[42]

The photo-essay also ties religious practice to politics in India. The section "Brahmans: Priests and statesmen are elite custodians of caste" describes the highest caste as the guardians of Hindu society for more than two millennia. The text also gives additional information about Jawaharlal Nehru (India's first Prime Minister) calling him "sensitive" and "Westernized" as he has made attempts to loosen the limits of caste. Nehru's portrait on the opposite page (figure 4) shows a nearly bald man, dressed in a buttoned jacket, sitting at a desk and smelling a rose. The photograph caption reads:

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39 "The Caste System," *Life*, 105.

40 Said, *Orientalism*, 60.

41 "The Caste System," *Life*, 106.

42 Said, *Orientalism*, 61.

"Most Famous Brahman, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, was recently interviewed by British correspondents on Hindu-Moslem [sic] relationships. While expounding politics he gently sniffed a rose."[43] The photo-essay, however, presents Nehru as an exception to his caste, naming Sita Ram, an Orthodox Priest, as a "typical" Brahman who capitalizes on his priestly duties by not only earning a monthly salary from serving the Maharaja of Mysore, but also making exponentially more money by presiding over "ceremonial feasts." Above the text, a photographic print of Ram occupies most of the page (figure 5). Dressed in a turban and cloak, each item of clothing is decorated with embroidery work, which reflects light and looks like gold. The derisive caption reads: "In the Maharaja's chapel Brahman Priest Sita Ram, clad in his elaborate ceremonial robes and a gaudy turban, recites the Hindu scriptures."[44] The attention given to Ram's salary, turban and robes implies that his appearance and lifestyle are too affluent for a religious leader.

However, this suggestion does not hold true if one considers the painting hanging to Ram's left in the photograph. In the painting, the Hindu goddess of prosperity, Lakshmi sits on a lotus flower. Prosperity as expressed by Lakshmi and inferred by heavy symbolism within the painting is not limited to terms of financial wealth. Each of Lakshmi's four hands holds symbolic meaning. In two hands, she carries lotus blossoms, signifying purity. In her up-turned, right hand she gives a gesture of reassurance and fearlessness, while the open palm of her left hand symbolizes eternal generosity. Furthermore, to the left of the goddess, an elephant rises from the water symbolizing

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43 "The Caste System," *Life*, 106.

44 "The Caste System," *Life*, 107.

fertility and growth, which suggests that wealth can be measured in family and age.[45] For an informed viewer, the Hindu iconography would complicate *Life*'s description of the "typical" wealthy Brahman insofar as the symbolism associated with the Hindu goddess promotes the giving of wealth rather than merely amassing it. The article also mentions that some Brahmans live as "hermits and beggars," which challenges *Life*'s claim that Priest Sita Ram is a "typical" Brahman.[46] However, attention to the culturally specific meaning of the Brahman's robes and artwork remain unexplained by the article.

The following page of *Life* describes the Kshatriya caste that "include[s] India's rich princes and policemen." The photographic print above the text shows a man dressed in a military uniform and holding a bullwhip tucked under his arm (figure 6). Behind him stands a four-story building decorated in architectural detail. On the first floor, a series of arches frames several doorways; the second and third floors are lined with windows covered by latticework screens. According to the photograph caption, "The Maharaja of Bikaner stands in [the] courtyard of his red sandstone palace. The honeycomb of cells above him houses [the] ruler's many concubines."[47] This assertion is contested in the September 22, 1947, issue of *Life* by a published letter to the editor from one of the

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45 "The Goddesses: Lakshmi, goddess of Wealth and Prosperity," Art Gallery of New South Wales, accessed August 11, 2014, http://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/sub/goddess/lakshmi.html.

46 "The Caste System," *Life*, 107.

47 "The Caste System," *Life*, 108.

Maharaja's representatives who refutes the claim that the Maharaja would keep concubines.[48]

The imagined concubines (which the reader cannot, or is not permitted to see) implicate the Maharaja in the prominent fantasy of the Oriental harem. According to scholar of English Ruth Bernard Yeazell, the trope of "the harem" reinforces perceptions of Oriental cultures as static and timeless, and provides a trope that could stir "historical memories" for a changed and advanced Western viewer.[49] The text also elaborates on the man's inclination towards comfort, provided by British imperial support under which the once powerful Kshatriya warriors have been made lazy by excessive wealth that has provided him with such extravagance as an air-conditioned train and "[fifty] servants, including a wine-taster." This implied idleness is symptomatic of one whose lifestyle engages with women of an Oriental harem, who lie waiting until they are called at the whim their master. The brief report on the "warrior" caste also cites Siddhartha Guatama the Buddah, teacher and founder of Buddhism, as a former Kshatriya who "rebelled

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48 *Life,* September 22, 1947, 28. A letter to the editor from Narain Singh (a Director of Publicity headquartered in the Bikaner State of India) disputes the presence of concubines saying that "[m]any foreign publications have long held fantastic notions about our maharajas and apparently LIFE is no exception. . . . It can emphatically be stated without hesitation that not only is there no truth whatever, but the words are regarded as highly offensive and seriously damaging to his personal reputation and standard of life." See *Life Magazine,* September 22, 1947, 28. In Bourke-White's memoir *Halfway to Freedom*, a caption below the photograph notes that "[u]nlike others of his princely colleagues, he has only one wife." See the picture section "PRINCELY INDIA" in Margaret Bourke-White, *Halfway to Freedom* (Simon and Schuster, Inc.: New York, 1949).

49 Ruth Bernard Yeazell, *Harems of the Mind: Passages of Western Art and Literature* (Yale University Press: New Haven, 2000), 233-234.

against the evils of caste," thereby providing a moral judgment of the caste system from the perspective of another religious figure.[50]

In the photo-essay, the print of the "portrait" of Rampuria and his brothers appears in the section titled "Merchants: Vaisyas include businessmen, Mahatma Gandhi." A portrait of Gandhi, however, is not included. By using this single photographic print, *Life* implies that the room interior in which the three men sit exemplifies the standard of living of the Vaisya caste. Described as the business class of India who are bound by scripture to oversee commerce and cattle, some Vaisyas included individuals who have resigned from economic endeavors (specifically Gandhi), but the majority of Vaisyas "resemble" Rampuria. The text states: "Bhanwar Rampuria owns whole blocks of houses and many mills. He sleeps in a great silver bed and has furnished his house in as bad taste as the room shown here." No photographs printed in the article showed a row of houses or the silver bed. This text functions as "excessive anchorage," a term used by Behdad to note attempts to ground the photograph in a specific meaning and thus "direct the reader to exclude his or her own interpretation."[51]

A caption under the printed photograph further interprets the scene for the *Life* reader: "Wealthy moneylender Bhanwar Rampuria (left) lolls with brothers amid [a] jumble of bad pictures, fine silver and chandeliers that do not work."[52] In the printed "portrait" scene (figure 1), the chandeliers do appear unlighted, but that does not

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50 "The Caste System," *Life*, 108.

51 Behdad, 26.

52 "The Caste System," *Life*, 109.

necessarily mean that they are broken. Globe light fixtures cast shadows on the back wall that black out details on the paintings visible in the "interaction pose" (figure 2). *Life* also cropped the large crystal chandelier out of the printed "portrait" scene in the magazine, which becomes evident if one compares the format of the "interaction" and "portrait" poses. Cropping the radiant chandelier eliminates the wide tonal range of the photographic print, reinforcing the assertion in the photo-caption that the chandeliers did not work. Asserting the deterioration of the Oriental environment due in part to the idle nature of the moneylender reinforces the theme of decay and corruption that Nochlin identifies in the unrepaired wall tiles in Gérôme's *Snake Charmer*.[53] The supposedly non-functioning lights provided a visual and textual metaphor by which to ascribe moral judgment: as the lights in the "portrait" scene need to be replaced, so does India's ill-functioning caste system.[54]

The Sudra caste and Untouchables are the last groups described under the heading, "Laborers: Sudra caste is doomed to servitude." Introduced as laborers dedicated to the three higher castes, an accompanying printed photograph illustrates the Sudra's servitude. In the scene (figure 7), a man sits in the bough of a tree on what appears to be a nest, covered by a tent-shaped shelter constructed of long blades of grass. A cloth covers his head, shielding his face from the sun. The caption reads: "This Sudra belongs to [a] subcaste whose members have to spend their days perching in trees as

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53 Nochlin, 38.

54 For further examples of this Orientalist device, see Kenneth Bendiner, "The Portrayal of the Middle East in British Painting 1835-1860" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Columbia University, 1979), 110-11.

scarecrows to keep fields free of birds and animals." Equating the man to a scarecrow, an inanimate object, characterizes the caste system as de-humanizing. Of the Untouchables, *Life* asserted, "[o]ther faiths have given them hope."[55] Described as uneducated and outcast (literally out-*caste*, as they are not considered a part of the caste system), Untouchables turned to Christian missionaries and the Muslim community because they were forbidden from coming into contact with members of the Hindu castes. A printed photograph on the opposing page (figure 8) features a young woman and a small boy. While the woman is clothed, the boy appears naked but for a necklace from which the symbolic Christian cross hangs. The photograph focuses closely on the woman and boy, emphasizing the crowded environment of the segregated "chawls" in which Untouchables were required to live.

The final page of *Life's* "Caste System" photo-essay features a printed photograph of an elephant carrying its keeper (figure 9). The brief excerpt below the photographic scene asserts the sacred role of cows in Hinduism, but also mentions the elephant as an animal kept by temples. Claiming that Hindus can be reborn, an explanation of reincarnation reads, "This elephant… may very well be a reincarnated Hindu sinner. Following caste tradition, it may in [its] previous life have been a Brahman, a Kshatriya or a Vaisya who sinned greatly or a Sudra who sinned just a little. Or it may have been an Untouchable who hardly sinned at all."[56]

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55 "The Caste System," *Life*, 110.

56 Ibid., 112.

An editorial by Robert Neville, titled "Caste is the Curse of India," occupies a page in the middle of "The Caste System" photo-essay. Distinct from the photo-essay, the editorial offers Neville's own consideration of the Hindu caste system (specifically the system of merit associated with reincarnation), but the author writes with a tone that suggests he sees the practice as more ridiculous than pious. He makes his opinion clear as he notes that the enforced designation of work according to caste complicates everyday tasks in India, for which he provides several examples. In one cited case, sweepers (Untouchables who clean latrines for a living) refused to work in the city of Nagpur. Without members of the lower caste to remove waste, members of higher castes had to clean their own facilities, though performing the tasks would "pollute" them. The event also required government resources when sweepers became angered by the "strike-breaking" and police had to protect those who chose to take up cleaning. Neville emphasizes the perceived impracticality of caste system as he describes the management of water in India. Brahmans in southern India consider water that comes from pipes as "polluted" because they connect to and service the living areas of many castes. Brahmans accordingly require a designated well from which they draw their water. Neville then juxtaposes his description of the well with an account of how the Ganges River is perceived as "unpollutable" despite its being accessible to all castes and littered with "refuse and dead bodies."[57]

According to Neville, industrialization in India will loosen the stringent caste boundaries and practices that extend into social realms. For example, means of mass

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[57] Robert Neville, "Caste is the Curse of India," *Life*, May 19, 1947, 106.

transportation and lodging like trains and hotels would not carry pollution from low castes to high castes. The author's description of industrial effects in India, however, is not without satire. He ends his one-page editorial by referring to the trend of "subcasting" (dividing general categories of labor into smaller hierarchical levels) described in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* and sardonically imagines that "drivers of Cadillacs . . . [will] refuse to have anything to do with the men who drive Buicks and the Oldsmobile drivers might soon decline to let their children marry the offspring of those who drive the lower-cost Pontiac."[58]

The photo-essay and Neville's editorial represented a culture in India that was very different from that experienced by the American readers of *Life*. The inability of Hindus to advance their social or economic standing through merit specifically conflicted with the popular concept of the "American Dream" as described in James Truslow Adams' book *The Epic of America*. Adams explains that the American dream is

> that dream of a land in which life should be better and richer and fuller for everyone, with opportunity for each according to ability or achievement. . . . It is not a dream of motor cars and high wages merely, but a dream of social order in which each man and each woman shall be able to attain to the fullest stature of which they are innately capable, and be recognized by others for what they are, regardless of the fortuitous circumstances of birth or position.[59]

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[58] Ibid., 106.

[59] James Truslow Adams, *The Epic of America* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1933), 214-215.

Readers of *Life* included families and individuals living "between" the rich and poor with potential for social and economic mobility.[60] Individuals in a Hindu caste, however, would have to wait until their reincarnation to receive the rewards of their labor.

The ideals that Adams describes are echoed in a 1941 essay "The American Century" by *Life* founder Henry Luce in which he trumpeted the universal and necessary application of American ideals of democracy and equality on a worldwide scale.[61] In explaining how to initiate the American Century, Luce called America to be "the Good Samaritan of the entire world." Luce ties his political call-to-arms to Biblical text, which he explicates later in the editorial:

> We have some things in this country which are infinitely precious and especially American—a love of freedom, a feeling for the quality of opportunity, a tradition of self-reliance and independence and also of co-operation. In addition to ideals and notions which are especially American, we are the inheritors of all the great principles of Western civilization--above all Justice, the love of Truth, the ideal of Charity. . . . It now becomes our time to be the powerhouse from which the ideals spread throughout the world and do their mysterious work of lifting the life of mankind from the level of the beasts to what the Psalmist called a little lower than the angels.[62]

Associating Christian principles with American identity and ideals, Luce constructs a conventional, "Western," American "Self" against which a different, Eastern, non-American "Other" can be defined. As David Morgan explains, "*Life* interpreted religion's

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60 Terry Smith, "LIFE-Style Modernity: Making Modern America," in *Looking at LIFE Magazine*, ed. Erika Doss (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2001), 27.

61 Henry R. Luce, "The American Century," *Life*, February 17, 1941, 61-65.

62 Ibid., 65. The Biblical text to which Luce refers is from the Book of Psalms, chapter 8, verse 5.

role in the modern world as inherently conservative: as guardian of democracy, as the locus of traditional authority, as the seat of ethnic identity, and as a pure expression of national identity."[63] The photo-essay in which Bourke-White's photograph appeared presented the Hindu religion and caste system as a contrast to Luce's American ideals, showing not only how different the Hindu culture was from that in America but also how far some countries stood from the self-proclaimed advances and enlightenment in Luce's "American Century."

A part of America's presumed role as a "global Good Samaritan" also included international commerce. The May 19, 1947, issue of *Life* contained one particular advertisement for the International Editions of *Time* and *Life.* Using a photo-illustration of a home interior, the ad claimed that "This American living room comes from 30 different countries" and further identified ten items in the printed photograph as using resources from six continents.[64] The ad concludes for the reader: "So world business is *your* business! It adds to your comfort and your income. So let's have more of it!"[65] Other photo-essays in the May 19, 1947, issue of *Life* provided loose interpretations of international "business" through news stories. Informational articles on global events included "May Day in Moscow," "Korea: Its freedom will cost us money and will mean a triumph for U.S. foreign policy," "A Great King's Funeral: More than 750,000 subjects

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63 David Morgan, "The Image of Religion in American *Life*," in *Looking at LIFE Magazine* (Smithsonian Institution Press: Washington, DC, 2001) 140.

64 *Life*, May 19, 1947, 125.

65 Ibid., 125. Emphasis in original.

gather to mourn Christian X of Denmark," and "Avak the Healer: Armenian mystic flies to California to treat son of millionaire vintner."[66] Combining information and enterprise, *Life* magazine wove economic undertones into its journalistic photo-essays and articles. The magazine presented images of Adams' "American Dream" with what Terry Smith calls "the magical sociality between products and citizens."[67]

Smith also acknowledges the narrative and conceptual complexities placed throughout the pages of *Life*. The magazine was not merely a generator of material desire; the publication fashioned "The American Dream" reality through an emphasis on difference and distance from its international subjects. According to Smith, "*Life*'s project [was] . . . to define the typical American Life by celebrating the strengths of dynamic but ultimately fusible internal, local and regional differences in contrast to the fascinating but potentially dangerous oddity of external and international differences."[68]

In the May 19, 1947, issue of *Life*, the American perspective of the magazine towards international issues emphasizes an exotic difference in *A Moneylender's House* (and the printed photographs that accompany it), which is framed by presumably elucidatory text. The magazine thus provided a readership of millions with visual and textual information through which to understand Rampuria's profession and religion. This communication of information, however, was not achieved in the lone display of photographic material.

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66 *Life,* May 19, 1947, 27-31, 32, 36-37, 34-35.

67 Smith, 26.

68 Ibid., 30.

The interdependence of printed text and photographs to communicate "The Caste System" photo-essay provides an example of Behdad's network theory of Orientalism. Rather than using a stand-alone image to represent "the Orient," *Life* implicitly and explicitly compared Bourke-White's photograph to the ideals of Henry Luce (informed by an American, Christian perspective) and images of the United States to depict Rampuria as an overtly different "Other" from the "Self," the readers of *Life.* The next chapter continues an analysis of the networks of Orientalism that are seen within exhibitions and publications, as texts and images reinforce a Self/Other binary around Bourke-White's "interaction" photograph.

CHAPTER 3 The Traveling Photographer, an Emphasis of Distance and Difference

"It [is] a whole body of photography which gives it all a frame," asserted Bourke-White. "We are all spinning threads to form the warp and woof of recorded history and the work of all of us woven together is swept up into the living whole."[69] Publications and exhibitions that championed Bourke-White's work presented readers and viewers with a presumed "living whole" as they included collections of her photographs that became representative of her projects and career. Prints of the "interaction" photograph of Rampuria and his brothers appear in a number of such publications and exhibitions that present Bourke-White's photographs as representative of her celebrity status rather than the identities of her photographic subjects. As a result of this shift in emphasis, the contexts in which the "interaction" scene has been exhibited or published do not explicitly perpetuate the Occident/Orient binary, but they do invoke binaries of "near"/"far" and "familiar"/"strange" to celebrate Bourke-White's work while presenting the photographic subject as "distant" and "different."

During her career and lifetime, Bourke-White emphatically defended photography as a factual means to objectively interpret world events. In a conference keynote address she used the metaphor of a coin: on one side the photographer's experience and

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[69] "'Keynote Speech' Second Annual Photojournalism Conference," Margaret Bourke-White Papers, Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University Libraries, 7.

knowledge informs the photograph, while on the other the photograph must communicate this condensed experience and understanding to the public.[70] Bourke-White compiled her experiences and printed photographs from India in her memoir *Halfway to Freedom: A Report on the New India in the Words and Photographs of Margaret Bourke-White*, published in 1949. The majority of Bourke-White's book contains her account of the Partition of India and Pakistan in 1947 when Great Britain granted India its independence and gave its governing authority to the Congress Party (made mostly of Hindus) and the Muslim League. Differing political opinions on whether India should remain a united country or split into two independent nations led to violent conflicts between religious groups in Calcutta. As a foreign correspondent for *Life*, Bourke-White interviewed and photographed several famous individuals, including Mahatma Gandhi, Mahomet Ali Jinnah ("leader of the Muslim League and architect of Pakistan"), and Jawaharlal Nehru (the first Prime Minister of India).[71] Bourke-White also ventured across India noting the conditions of people from various religious and socioeconomic circumstances. The division of India into two nations spurred a mass migration of people: Hindu peoples living in the newly formed Pakistan fled to India, while Islamic peoples in India fled to Pakistan. Conditions were harsh and dangerous as a drought ravaged India, causing a

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70 Ibid., 1.

71 Margaret Bourke-White, *Halfway to Freedom* (Simon and Schuster, Inc.: New York, 1949), 13.

food shortage. In a vast geographic area without modern irrigation technology, even those who did not migrate also faced hardship.[72]

The "interaction" scene of Rampuria and his brothers appears in a group of printed photographs titled "Face of the Land," some of which are accompanied by captions that derisively describe the relationship of moneylenders to the people depicted.[73] A man holding a plow in a dry field appears in the first printed photograph (figure 10). The man wears a relatively narrow cloth wrapped around his waist, covering his lower torso, and another one around his head; his hands are covered in a pale dust. To the right of the man, a white ox bends its head toward the earth. A caption notes the plight of the peasant farmer and refers to the "baniya," a word that translates to "moneylender":

> With primitive implements . . . [farm peasants] scratch out the meagerest [sic] livings, struggling to feed their families, meet the land rent, pay the moneylender. A broken plow, a stricken ox, a poor crop may put a man in debt beyond a lifetime's repayment, at the baniya's rate of interest, and thus generations become bound to the moneylender's wheel.[74]

Other printed photographs following that of the man and ox showed villagers gathering water from a well (figure 11), a boy wearing almost no clothing while hoisting a bundle of long grass (figure 12), and people holding out their cupped hands in the direction of the photographer as if they were both asking for and preparing to receive

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72 Ibid., 3-12, 147-154.

73 Ibid.. The unnumbered section of photographs is found between pages 150 and 151.

74 Bourke-White, unnumbered plate titled "The Indian Peasant," between 150-151.

some kind of aid (figure 13). A caption that mentions the moneylender accompanied one close-up portrait of a gray-haired man, who squints his eyes in sunshine, deepening the age lines on his face (figure 14). "This farmer is younger than he looks. He has worked on the land all his life, never much above the margin of hunger. The only way he could get seed to sow a crop was to go to the moneylender. And when the crop failed, how could he repay the loan?"[75]

Two plates in the "Face of the Land" section of printed photographs depict the aforementioned moneylender. Sitting cross-legged on a padded seat, "The Moneylender" in the first photograph wears a clean, white-striped shirt (figure 15). He holds a pen in his hand, ready to write in the large book on his lap while another book sits directly in front of him. Columns of script, similar to those found in an accounting ledger, fill the books. According to Bourke-White's caption, the moneylender burdens his clients with high monthly interest rates, charging as much as twenty percent; this practice has made him a millionaire, even when measured in American currency.[76]

Bhanwar Rampuria is not named in *Halfway to Freedom*, but the "interaction" photograph of him and his brothers, titled "The Baniya's House," is printed on an adjacent page. The printed photograph gives a view of the room interior from floor to ceiling. The large chandelier above them hangs in full view and illuminates the room. Though the photographic scene only shows a single room, the accompanying caption alludes to objects "crowded" into other rooms, including silver objects and toys "bought

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75 Bourke-White, unnumbered plate titled "Peasants Age Early," between 150-151.

76 Bourke-White, unnumbered plate titled "The Moneylender," between 150-151.

in a craze of possession." Text further narrates the printed photographic scene, indicating that Rampuria is teaching his brothers to be moneylenders, so that they, too, can decorate their homes with similar objects. [77]

According to Ali Behdad, a title that becomes "fixed" to the photograph operates as part of a network of Orientalism. By reading the image titles, "The Moneylender" and "The Baniya's House," the viewer can project meaning onto the printed photograph in advance of making his or her own observation about the actual images.[78] The photographic scene does not depict any act of moneylending or business—the moneylender sits in a relaxed pose and casual dress. Without the title, the viewer might surmise that Rampuria received his wealth from a royal business affiliation, perhaps with the men wearing British imperial dress who are depicted in the paintings hanging below the wall-mounted jaguar skin. Rampuria's family might have worked for British officials in India as moneylenders served as translators.[79] In their business, moneylenders commonly charged their borrowers high interest rates without regulation. Furthermore, the lenders could continue to collect loans from a borrower's descendants.[80]

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77 Bourke-White, unnumbered plate titled "The Baniya's House," between 150-151.

78 Ibid., 25-26.

79 Amal Chatterjee, *Representations of India, 1740-1840: The Creation of India in the Colonial Imagination* (New York: St. Martin's Press, Inc., 1998), 155.

80 Abbe J. A. Dubois, *Hindu Manners, Customs and Ceremonies*, translated and edited by Henry K. Beauchamp, C.I.E., 3rd edition (London: Oxford University Press, 1906), 656-7.

Though not mentioned in Bourke-White's memoir, this lending practice varied drastically from those of American banks and lenders. By 1916 the United States passed the Uniform Small Loan Law to prevent usury. The law specifically targeted "loan sharks" issuing oppressively high interest rates, required non-bank lenders to acquire licenses, and capped loan interest rates. The work of moneylending also requires mental rather than physical labor; the printed photograph does not explicitly convey whether or not the man in the photographic scene is indeed "working." Instead, the printed scenes of working peasants (e.g., that of a boy who has carried his bundle of grass for twelve miles) contrast with that of the moneylender sitting among his "gadgets of silver" and suggest an unfair economic system that does not reward labor.[81] And while Bourke-White's narrative and photographs emphasized that India held much promise to become like the United States, the people she photographed lived in a country that was very different from the one in which she lived.[82]

Seven years after Bourke-White's memoir was published, a photographic print of Rampuria appeared in the 1956 exhibition *The Photography of Margaret Bourke-White* at

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[81] The full caption of the photograph reads, "PEASANT GLEANER: Because the monsoon was late the plains parched. To keep the cattle alive, the peasants gleaned grass from the hillsides. This boy, in South India, walked twelve miles with this bundle; the near hills had been picked bare." See Bourke-White, *Halfway to Freedom,* unnumbered plate between 150-151.

[82] Bourke-White, 153-154. Bourke-White explains that Indian students and engineers have studied American initiatives like the Tennessee Valley Authority to learn how to control India's flooding river during monsoons through canals and irrigation channels. According to Bourke-White, "America is setting her stamp on this new growth in India."

the George Eastman House in Rochester, New York.[83] The exhibition celebrated the photographer's work as a photojournalist and emphasized her status as a celebrity. For the exhibition, Eastman House produced a seven-page catalogue, which characterized Bourke-White as a "fearless" photographer and noted her status as the "first woman photographer accredited to the U.S. Armed Forces [and] the first authorized to fly on a combat mission."[84] Photographs printed in the catalogue and included in the exhibition spanned over three decades of her career; among them were Bourke-White's images of people and places in the United States and abroad. The idea of geographic distance and travel is implied in the photograph printed on the cover of the exhibition catalogue as it shows Bourke-White standing in front of a military airplane; printed photographs inside the catalogue included subjects from Russia, South Africa, India and other foreign countries.

The title *Money Lender's Home, India, 1947* accompanies the printed "interaction" photograph of Rampuria, though the exhibition catalogue does not include his name or explain his relationship to the two men with whom he sits (his brothers). The catalogue text contextualizes the photographic print as a record of the "last days" of

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83 After its display at Eastman House, the exhibition traveled to the Andrew Dickson White Museum at Cornell University and then the Art Institute of Chicago, where *The Moneylender's House* was later acquisitioned into the collection. Correspondence between *Life* offices details Peter Pollack's request for a 16-by-20-inch print of the photograph. Pollack, a photographer and public relations consultant at the Art Institute, also curated the Worcester Art Museum's exhibition *Ideas in Images*. Margaret Bourke-White Papers, Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University Libraries.

84 *The Photography of Margaret Bourke White* (Time, Inc., 1956), 4.

economic disparity in India following its independence.[85] This emphasis on the photograph capturing the end of Indian society under British Imperialism recalls the practice of preserving a disappearing Orient. This impulse to preserve through the photograph was also practiced in the nineteenth century as photographers traveled throughout the Middle East to make detailed images of architectural ruins from the Holy Land. With the images, Western viewers could "see" past civilizations. Such images provided the Western viewer with knowledge of the "other" culture.[86] Still, the catalogue characterized Bourke-White's photographs as "documents" and "records," identified by the locations and years in which Bourke-White made them. [87] The titles indicating where and when the printed photographs were taken also provide information like stamps on a passport, marking Bourke-White's travels. The catalogue essay ends its review of Bourke-White's photographs by calling them "a unique chronicle of contemporary life which will always be a treasured record of history."[88] *Whose* life and history the photographic prints chronicle and record remains vague in the essay. However, the exhibition title makes the unnamed entity clear: this is *The Photography of Margaret Bourke-White*.

The 1962 exhibition *Ideas and Images* at the Worcester Art Museum in Massachusetts also included *A Moneylender's House.* Curated by Peter Pollack, the

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85 Ibid., 3.

86 Behdad, 19-20.

87 *The Photography of Margaret Bourke White*, 3.

88 Ibid., 6.

exhibition displayed the work of ten photographers, each of whom was represented by ten photographic prints.[89] Pollack called the selected prints "masterworks" that presented the unique vision of a photographer. These "masterworks" included examples of the medium that showed what Pollack called "realms that are exclusively photographic."[90] According to Pollack, "[W]e always feel that a photograph, no matter how fantastic, shows us reality itself . . . There is a dimension of primary nature in every photograph. This, in a way, accounts for the greater effectiveness of photography on the simplest level of visual communication: data gathering and storing, the recording of raw information." Pollack asserts that the camera enables a photographer to cast reality within his or her personal perspective and aesthetic intuition as the photographic print allows the "raw information" gathered from within the mind of the photographer to be observed by the viewer.[91] In considering Bourke-White's work, Pollack specifically noted her contribution to the photo-essay genre and her ability to give viewers of her printed photographs essential, real and direct visual information. However, Pollack acknowledged Bourke-White's editorial power over what the viewer sees, noting that, "She deliberately heightens the drama but nothing is forced, nothing is faked."[92]

While Bourke-White's photographs are not "fake," the dramatic viewpoints of her printed photographs implied geographic difference and distance between subject—ideas

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89 *Ideas in Images* was on view from October 17 to December 18, 1962.

90 Pollack, *Ideas in Images* (Worcester, MA: Commonwealth Press, 1962), 5.

91 Ibid., 4.

92 Ibid., 14.

that were enhanced by curatorial choices. In addition to *A Moneylender's House,* Pollack selected three other photographic prints from her portfolio of India: *Gandhi*, 1946; *Girl, India*, 1948 (figure 16); and *Old Woman During Famine, India*, 1948. Additional prints from her travels abroad included those of South African coal miners and concentration camp prisoners at Buchenwald. These photographs of distant cultures and events contrasted with more local images of American modernism and industry that could be seen in Bourke-White's images of Fort Peck Dam (figure 17), the George Washington Bridge, and the Statue of Liberty.

The emphasis on "difference" is not only apparent in geographic distance between the sites where Bourke-White took these photographs, but also in the formal differences. *A Moneylender's House* presents the viewer with an ornate interior, rich with decoration and filled with a collection of personal effects. Comparatively, Bourke-White's 1936 photograph *Fort Peck Dam* (figure 17) provides an example of industrial progress and grandeur. The geometric design and framing of the dam presents a monumental image of a familiar, modern and pragmatic structure. The juxtaposition of the utilitarian aesthetic of the dam against the ornate decoration that fills *A Moneylender's House* emphasizes a visible difference between India and a modern America.

Peter Pollack's book *The Picture History of Photography* published in 1969 also emphasizes the geographic distance that Bourke-White traveled with her camera.[93] Pollack's volume organizes the history of photography within a canon of photographic

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[93] Peter Pollack, *The Picture History of Photography* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1969), 13.

genres, processes and practitioners. The section of his book, "Masters of the Modern Era" contains the chapter "Margaret Bourke-White: Roving Recorder." Pollack asserts Bourke-White's contributions to photography, describing the photojournalist as a prolific heroine of photography willing to travel "everywhere on the globe" for her photo-essay assignments.[94]

Among the nine printed photographs included in the "Roving Recorder" chapter, Pollack's book includes four scenes from her India assignments: a young girl wearing a coin necklace (figure 16), the Moneylender and his brothers (figure 2), the aftermath of Calcutta riots (figure 18), and Gandhi reading at his spinning wheel (figure 19). Other printed photographs from abroad include the two South African gold miners, and prisoners of the Buchenwald concentration camp. Pollack's selection of photographs emphasizes the great distances that Bourke-White traveled to create the photographs, and thereby made unseen parts of the world visible for an American audience. While Pollack does not include a printed photograph from Bourke-White's Korean War portfolio, his description of her bravery to travel "deep into the mountains held by the Red [Communist] guerillas" implies how far some of her assignments were geographically and ideologically from the United States.[95] His section on Bourke-White concludes with a photograph of the Statue of Liberty (figure 20); titled *The Face of Liberty* (1954), the print of the iconic figure metaphorically welcomes the "Roving Recorder" home from her far-off travels.

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94 Ibid., 389.

95 Ibid., 390.

The final and most recent publication that features *A Moneylender's House* is Sean Callahan's *The Photography of Margaret Bourke-White*, published three years after Pollack's volume. Callahan's book divides Bourke-White's career into chapters, one of which focuses on "The India Years, 1946-1948." The short chapter narrative notes Bourke-White's observation of "the powers of medievalism clinging to ancient privilege" in India. The photographer's statement depicts India as underdeveloped in comparison to the Western culture ruled by democracy from which Bourke-White comes. [96] Photographic prints of "The Great Migration" show people walking in sandals and bare feet, tent cities in which displaced peoples rested on their journeys, as well as refugees traveling with "crude wooden carts dragged by bullocks."[97] A brief caption of text accompanies most of the printed photographs, though some are only described by their titles (e.g., *A Sikh Family, Pakistan, 1947*).

In the case of *A Moneylender's House*, the caption text bears similarities to that published in *Life* magazine: "Surrounded in gaudy luxury achieved by milking the peasantry, Bhanwar Rampuria entertains his brothers, who want to be moneylenders too."[98] The word "peasantry" in relationship to the phrase regarding "the powers of medievalism" can tacitly refer to a feudal system that pre-dates the social and political structure of American democracy. Callahan's text thereby implicitly places the

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96 "The India Years 1946-1948," in *The Photographs of Margaret Bourke-White*, ed. Sean Callahan (Greenwich, CT: New York Graphic Society Ltd., 1972), 155.

97 Ibid., 163.

98 Ibid., 170.

moneylender in a medieval system and creates the illusion of a temporal distance. According to the caption, Bourke-White encountered a system that was not only the product of a distant culture but also an unfamiliar construct from the past.

The primary subject of the above exhibitions and publications was Bourke-White, herself. Images and written text that accompany the "interaction" photograph of Rampuria, however, establish a covert network of Orientalism supported by binaries of "near"/"far" and "strange"/"familiar." These binaries do not challenge and, in fact, reinforce the larger Self/Other binary of Said's Orientalism.

CHAPTER 4 Orientalist Binaries and Networks Underlying Concern

In 1966, Cornell Capa, a photojournalist and correspondent for *Life* magazine, founded the International Fund for Concerned Photography.[99] Through this fund Capa sought to support the work of photographers who exemplified his ideal of a "Concerned Photographer." According to Capa:

> The Fund is dedicated to the recognition of photography as a very personal means of communication, to the recognition of the photographer as an individual with his very own, recognizable graphic style and human content who translates what he sees into frozen reality. The resulting images bear the photographer's own respect for truth. . . . The role of the photographer is to witness and to be involved with his subject.[100]

Capa further defined the "Concerned Photographer" using words attributed to Lewis Hine: a Concerned Photographer "showed things that had to be corrected."[101]

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99 "About ICP," accessed March 7, 2015, http://www.icp.org/about-icp.

100 Cornell Capa, "Introduction," in *The Concerned Photographer* (New York: Grossman Publishers, 1968), unnumbered page. The Fund's mission also informed that of the International Center of Photography, which Capa founded in 1974.

101 Lewis W. Hine as quoted in Cornell Capa, "Introduction," *The Concerned Photographer,* unnumbered page.

In 1967, Capa worked with the Riverside Museum of New York to develop an exhibition of the same title. *The Concerned Photographer* debuted at the Riverside Museum and traveled worldwide between 1968 and 1970. The exhibition featured the work of six photojournalists, including that of Capa's late brother Robert, a famed war photographer.[102] Five years after the initial exhibition at the Riverside Museum, the Fund produced a sequel exhibition, *The Concerned Photographer 2*. This exhibit featured a group of eight photographers whose work showed not only circumstances and events in need of correction, but also what Capa's collaborator, Michael Edelson, called "an affirmation of life in all its forms" regardless of culture or location.[103]

A subsequent exhibition borrowing Capa's title and sharing his interest in global concerns opened at the Art Institute of Chicago in 2006. The introductory text panel to the exhibition described the photographic prints as "socially motivated" and "challenging," "intended to move, inspire, and impact viewers." The exhibition also credited the ten featured photographers with aspirations "to go beyond dispassionate objectivity, beyond merely bearing witness to their times."[104] The exhibition wall text also invited visitors to relate the photographic scenes of past events to current events and issues. While such a comparison suggests that the particular past causes for concern,

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[102] Other photographers were Werner Bischof, David Seymour, Robert Capa, Dan Weiner, André Kertész and Leonard Freed.

[103] Michael Edelson, "Preface," in *The Concerned Photographer 2* (New York: Grossman Publishers, 1972), unnumbered page.

[104] Katherine A. Bussard, Gregory J. Harris, and Newell G. Smith curated *The Concerned Photographer* at the Art Institute of Chicago (March 18 - June 11, 2006).

represented by the photographic prints, have been resolved, the statement also implies that the prints exhibit a universal human struggle against inequality that continues to this day. Though the most recent photographic print in the exhibition dates to 1986, the exhibition evokes the photographic scenes of the past as symbolic of issues of its 2006 present. The exhibition then presents what David Joselit calls an "emergent image," or one that is recast from its historical publication or exhibition context and presented to a contemporary audience.[105] The inclusion of photographs made in multiple locations around the world (including the United States, Italy, Poland, Germany, Ireland, Nicaragua, Brazil and the Gabonese Republic) emphasizes the idea of "universal" concern shared through a unified global experience. This inclusive "global perspective" implies that the countries and people depicted are not different from one another, insofar as the people portrayed face similar circumstances.

One section of the exhibition, "India's Independence," includes three photographs by Bourke-White. Among them is the "interaction" photograph, *A moneylender's house, India*. A text panel introduces Bourke-White's bravery in traveling to India amid conflicts between Hindu and Islamic people. The panel specifically describes the printed scene in Bourke-White's *Vultures of Calcutta, India* (1946) (figure 21) and notes, "While many photojournalists refused to enter this 'death zone,' Bourke-White realized that an image of this scene could remind us of the failures of global concern and action." The label also describes Bourke-White's encounter with Gandhi, calling him the "leader of the Indian independence movement and an advocate of non-violence." The text identifies

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[105] David Joselit, *After Art* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2012), 19-20. Accessed Feb. 24, 2015. ProQuest ebrary.

a photographic print of Gandhi at his spinning wheel (figure 22) as a portrait of a concerned individual who has been driven to action, though the viewer cannot see the specific outcomes of his concern in the photograph.

In contrast, *A moneylender's house, India* (1947) receives no explanation via the wall text. Instead, *A moneylender's house, India* serves as a foil to the photographic print of Gandhi. While the moneylender sits on the cushioned floor, a thin rug separates Gandhi from the hard floor. While the moneylender and his two companions wear pants and shirts, Gandhi wears only a *dhoti*, a single piece of unstitched cloth wrapped around the legs and knotted at the waist. The walls of the moneylender's home are heavily decorated, while the wall behind Gandhi is bare. The juxtaposition of *A moneylender's house, India* and *Mahatma Ghandi* [sic] *spinning* supports a sub-theme seen in the exhibition—the disparity between "those who have" and "those who have not." This inequality is meant to cause the viewer concern.

This same cause for concern can be seen in photographic prints of people in the United States made by employees of the Farm Security Administration (FSA) and exhibited in the section titled "The Great Depression." Several photographic scenes by Arthur Rothstein, Walker Evans, and Marion Post Wolcott show the families of tenant farmers and migrant workers living in run-down homes and over-crowded cars amid arid landscapes. Like the modest room where Gandhi sits in Bourke-White's photograph, *Coal miner's house, West Virginia* from 1935 (figure 23) by Evans shows an unfinished room interior in which advertising signs for Coca-Cola® and graduation gifts decorate the walls constructed from an amalgamation of scrap building materials.

The photographic print *World's highest standard of living* (figure 24) taken by Bourke-White during the Great Depression, shows a group of African Americans waiting in a breadline that has formed in front of a billboard.[106] The billboard picture includes a family (husband, wife, daughter, son and dog) cruising in a car that resembles the Packard Six; the billboard text reads, "World's highest standard of living: There's no way like the American Way," contrasting the circumstances of the individuals in the breadline, who "have not," with a mythic ideal. A photographic print by Wolcott shows one of the "haves" in the exhibition. Titled *Mr. R. B. Whitley in his general store, Wendell, North Carolina (He also owns a cotton exchange, real estate and is president of the bank)* (1940), the print (figure 25) shows the named man wearing a three-piece suit, bow tie and fedora hat. [107] He holds a cigar between his right thumb and index finger; a cane lies across his lap. Products in boxes and on tables fill Whitley's general store. The exhibited photographic prints collectively depict a disparity between "those who have" and "those who have not" as a universal feature of society regardless of geographic or national context.

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[106] Though Bourke-White made the photograph during the Great Depression, it was part of a *Life* magazine assignment and photo-essay covering the "Great Flood" in the Ohio River Valley. See *Life,* Feb. 15, 1937, 9.

[107] Titles of photographs made by FSA photographers were often lengthy. See "Mr. R. B. Whitley visiting in his general store. He is president of the bank and owns and runs practically all of the town, he is a big land owner, owns Whitley-Davis Farm and a cotton mill in Clayton. He said he cut down the trees and pulled the stumps out of main street and was the first man in that town of Wendell. Wake County, North Carolina," Library of Congress Prints & Photographs Division, Washington DC, 20540, http://www.loc.gov/pictures/resource/fsa.8c11136/.

These universal concerns create an inclusive perspective rather than one that emphasizes a position of interiority or exteriority (as emphasized by Said). Rather than presenting photographs as outside interpretations of events, Capa's ideal of the "Concerned Photographer" and the Art Institute exhibition display photographic subjects and their circumstances as a matter of fact. This informative function of the photograph then can incite the viewer to act on *his or her* concern for the photographic subject. As made explicit in the exhibition introductory panel: "*The Concerned Photographer* invites you to consider these images from the past alongside information about social change today."

Instead of emphasizing Bourke-White's status as an American photographer abroad or depicting the caste system in India through photographic representations (as *Life* presumes to do), text within the exhibition presented the prints as visual reminders of a "lack of global concern and action." The photographer, subject or viewer may hold such "global concern" in which he or she considers him or herself as part of the larger global community to which he or she offers assistance. This inclusive perspective might suggest that the viewer does not consider him or herself as viewing the exhibited photographic print from a position that is entirely "outside" the photographic scene. According to art historian and critic Hal Foster, "If it is true that we live today in a near-global economy, then a pure outside can no longer be presupposed."[108] Instead of a pure interior and exterior, Foster proposes a global identity that is an "imbrication" of the self and other,

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[108] Hal Foster, "Artist as Ethnographer?" in Fred Meyer, ed., *Traffic in Culture* (New York: NYU Press, 1996), 304.

meaning that the presumably separate binary positions overlap in a fused state.[109] The concept of "the global" suggests such an fusion of the "Occident" and "Orient" in the display of *A Moneylender's House* (as part of *The Concerned Photographer*) by de-emphasizing the difference and distance that supports a network of Orientalism. Notably, this imbrication is only a recent possibility with the accessibility of globally linked technology (e.g., the worldwide web) that has enabled a larger number of people to communicate with one another across countries and continents. This imbrication of cultures, then, does not deny geographical or cultural distance, but connects places and individuals. Sociology scholar Bryan S. Turner concedes, "[G]lobalization makes it very difficult to carry on talking about oriental and occidental cultures as separate autonomous or individual cultural regimes."[110]

While this global perspective bridges distance, it also acknowledges conflict caused by differences between ethnicities and cultures. Danny Lyon and Bruce Davidson's photographs made during the American Civil Rights movement emphasize the reality of difference, and present a cautionary narrative of divisive cultural policies that perpetuate the "Other" by the segregation of races. Lyon's *Demonstrators try to enter an "all-white" swimming pool, Cairo, Illinois* (figure 26), dated 1962, shows five African American men whose entry to the swimming pool is blocked by a group of white men and a sign that reads "Private Pool. Members Only." The confrontation in the

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109 Ibid., 304.

110 Bryan S. Turner, *Orientalism, Postmodernism and Globalism* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 9.

photographic scene anticipates the violence similar to that experienced by the man in Gordon Park's photograph *Battered man,* dated 1943 (figure 27); the pictured African American man's shirt is spattered with blood as he sits to receive treatment for a facial wound.[111] Similar violence is implicitly suggested by the "India's Independence" text panel, which notes religious difference between Islamic and Hindu peoples as the cause of conflict and tension between the groups.

Under these universal and shared concerns, *The Concerned Photographer*, then, takes an altruistic position that does not explicitly depict inhabitants of the "Orient" (as discussed in previous chapters) for the "Occident" to view. Instead the exhibition replaces the "Occident/Orient" with another Self/Other binary of "haves/have nots." Photographic scenes show that things lacked by the "have nots" vary in form. In the case of the migrant workers who are depicted in FSA photographs as living out of their motor vehicles, they lack a permanent dwelling or home—like the one in which Rampuria sits. Not all things lacked by the "have nots," however, are necessarily possessions. For example, photographs of the Civil Rights Movement contrast figures of African Americans, individuals who lack rights, against Whites, who have them. The exhibition thus presents a global array of photographic subjects that have needs (those who "have not") witnessed by the photographer and viewer, whom the exhibition assumes to be "haves." These "have nots" can then be perceived as "Other," by the "haves." The

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[111] The Art Institute of Chicago exhibition dated Parks' photograph to 1943, citing the event of the Harlem race riot of the same year. Recent research from the Art Institute dates the photograph to 1948 and references Parks' project that focused on Harlem gangs. See "About this Artwork," Art Institute of Chicago, accessed April 9, 2015, http://www.artic.edu/aic/collections/artwork/184378.

exhibition also communicates an expectation of the "haves" as it assumes that they share the curator's concern for the "have nots" and are willing to act on their concern. W. Eugene Smith's photographic prints of Dr. Albert Schweitzer and his medical facility in a small African town show the physician's fulfillment of this expectation (or presumed obligation). Photographic subjects are not the only "haves" interpolated by the exhibition as a concluding text panel aligned the exhibition viewer with the "haves" and addresses him or her with the question: "Are you concerned?"

Following this question, the panel invited the viewer to use computer stations that provided an engaged viewer with access to websites maintained by a number of humanitarian organizations, including the Red Cross and Unicef. Curators divided the selected organizations into five categories that related to photographs included in the exhibition: International Humanitarian Aid; Civil Rights; War, Revolution and Peace; Combating Poverty; and Labor Reform.[112] With the gallery computer stations, the visitors would "have" a resource to help them act on their concern.

Still, within the "have/have not" binary, another Self/Other emerges. The "haves" (the photographer, visitor, and photographic subjects like Rampuria, Schweitzer and Mr. Whitley) divide into two categories: those who make good with what they have and those who have too much while showing no concern. As the exhibition presents him, Rampuria falls into the latter category. The viewer cannot see or read any evidence of the

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[112] Since *The Concerned Photographer* closed at the Art Institute of Chicago, the interactive website that linked visitors to various organizations has been dismantled. My thanks go to Dr. Katherine Bussard who provided me with the list of categories and organizations that was presented to the educator and web designer who ultimately created the final version of the website that was accessible in the exhibition gallery.

moneylender's concern, while the "India's Independence" text panel commends Gandhi's leadership though the photographic print does not show signs of wealth.

Rather than viewing Rampuria as part of the "Orient," the viewer might see the moneylender as the "unconcerned other." Photographs of "unconcerned" individuals (e.g., the police officer and Mr. Whitley) contrast with photographs of individuals who have acted upon their concern (e.g., Gandhi and Dr. Albert Schweitzer). Through this comparison, the photographic prints present the viewer with a choice: to align themselves with those who make good, the "concerned self," or those who do nothing, "the unconcerned other."

CONCLUSION

The display and publication of Bourke-White's printed photographs of Rampuria reveal the conundrum in Said's call for an alternative to Orientalism and his contemplation of "how one can study other cultures and peoples from . . . a nonrepressive and nonmanipulative, perspective."[113] This challenge is seen foremost in the very act of making the photograph. Bourke-White's two "portrait" and "interaction" photographs show how documentary photography and its realistic detail is not purely an objective viewpoint. Rather, in the process of making a photograph, the photographer selects its subject and composes the scene from a reality that is much more complex than what appears in the photographic print; the photographic scene results from the photographer's manipulation, which makes Said's proposed "nonmanipulative perspective" impossible.

The printed photographs are also severely limited in their ability to present a "nonrepressive" perspective. The title of the photographs identifies the man as a "moneylender" rather than calling him by his formal name. In addition to the selective view of the photographer, the varied photographic prints are subject to the choices of the curators or authors who present them as part of a larger exhibition or publication. The founder and editors of *Life* decidedly constructed photo-essays to show international cultures as distinct and different from the targeted readership of the magazine. In the case

[113] Said, 24.

of "The Caste System," *Life* provided printed photographs and written text to derisively present Indian culture as inferior and unfamiliar to American culture. Bourke-White also made similar comparisons in her memoir through her printed photographs and written narrative. Later exhibitions and publications that focused on the photographer's career continued to draw upon the observable differences between the photographic subjects, as well as the distances Bourke-White traveled to make her photographs. Though these distinctions were not the primary theme of the exhibitions and books, they depicted Rampuria as distinctly "Other" for their viewers and readers.

The Concerned Photographer exhibition at the Art Institute of Chicago displays the extant differences and distances between races and cultures to propose an inclusive perspective. However, the exhibition also makes clear the ever-present binary of the Self/Other in relation to economic status and resources, while it implicitly emphasizes the role of the viewer in the creation of the "Other." Though the viewer might sympathize with the people depicted in the photographic scene, the photographic print itself distinguishes and distances the viewer from the pictured individual. Even Said's call for an alternative to Orientalism emphasizes the study of "other cultures and peoples." This presence of the "Other" thereby precludes Bourke-White's photographs of Rampuria and his brothers from providing an alternative to Orientalism that is both nonrepressive and nonmanipulative.

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